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Joe Sheppard
paints
"The Big Apple"

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Joe Sheppard
paints
"The Big Apple"

October 17th thru 28th, 1972

Grand Central Art Galleries, Inc.

In the Biltmore Hotel
40 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Phone: TN 7-3344

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Photographs By

TADDER — BALTIMORE



Born in Baltimore in 1930, JOSEPH SHEPPARD studied art at The Maryland Institute of Art on a four year scholarship. In 1956-57, he was artist-in-residence at Dickinson College. In addition to several important awards from the Peale Museum in Baltimore, Mr. Sheppard's prizes and honors include the Emily Lowe Prize in the 43rd Allied Artists Exhibition of 1956; a Guggenheim Travelling Fellowship in 1957; the John F. and Anna Lee Stacy Scholarship Fund Award in 1958; the Bronze Medal of Honor in the Allied Artists Exhibition of 1959; the prize for Figure Painting, Allied Artists, 1963; the \$1,000 First Purchase Prize in the National Show at the Butler Institute of American Art; and the John J. McDonough Prize, Butler Institute, 1967; most recently he was awarded the Governor's Prize, Maryland Artist Exhibition, Baltimore Museum, 1971. Mr. Sheppard's paintings are included in many museum and private collections, including the Butler Institute; the Davenport, Municipal Art Gallery, Iowa; the University of Arizona Museum; the Columbus Museum of Fine Arts, Ohio; the Westmoreland County Museum, Pennsylvania; the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences; the Baltimore Museum of Art; and the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery, Memphis, Tennessee. Most recently he has had one-man exhibitions at the Butler Institute of Art in 1964, '72, the Westmoreland County Museum, 1966, '72, and Davenport Municipal Art Gallery, 1967. He has just finished seven large historical murals for Baltimore's new Police Department headquarters building and currently teaches at the Maryland Institute of Art.

Returning after two years with a show titled "Joe Sheppard Paints the Big Apple," the artist here reveals New York City, as his 1970 exhibition in this gallery revealed his views of America and Europe. Like most of the artists whose genius made Paris and, later, New York world art centers, Joseph Sheppard is a provincial. He has his roots in Baltimore, absorbing strength from his native heath, as a Chesapeake crab absorbs plankton. He knows New York well and intimately, yet always he sees it with an acute sense of newness and wonder, and he paints it with the brush strokes of a master.

And so this exhibition records new visions of familiar places, and in a few instances, such as the paintings of the vanished El and of a subway kiosk, brings scenes back from memory. It records change, as in the depiction of the Women's Lib invasion of McSorley's. Here is New York in vibrant aspects: slum children splashing in the delicious gush from a fire hydrant on a sweltering midsummer day, a sidewalk shop on MacDougal Street displaying fancifully stenciled sweat shirts; hot dog stands, a rehearsal of the Rockettes, skating in Rockefeller Center during a snowstorm last winter; chess games in Washington Square, varied humanity at a Tenth Avenue bus terminal; a grace-note—pigeons on the sidewalk at Tiffany's. Even such a tired cliché of nostalgia-cum-picturesqueness as a horse-drawn carriage in Central Park becomes, on a Sheppard canvas, a solid composition admirable for painterly qualities aside from its subject. The variety is astounding. It ranges from the superb painting of visitors viewing works by Rubens at the Metropolitan Museum to the aesthetic and ecological indictment called "American Heritage"—a mountain of junked automobiles, buses and trucks.

Sheppard's feelings for New York, and his periodic urges to return, are shared by me, as they are bound to be vicariously enjoyed by many another visitor to this show. Myself a fellow-Baltimorean, I knew New York in my most impressionable years, as I was also to know Paris and London, and I have periodically renewed acquaintance. Every visit is a recognition of the familiar and of change. In this connection I think of another fellow-Baltimorean, H. L. Mencken—at the height of his career the greatest critic America has produced commuted weekly to the New York that published him to the world; but he returned at week-end to his provincial base, to get his boilers stoked. Mencken would have hugely appreciated these Sheppard paintings; for although his professional concern touched but incidentally upon painting (with music as his passionate amateur interest) I can testify, from close association, to his sensitive reaction to masterly figurative work such as Sheppard's. As a realist, Mencken was aware of, and privately applauded, the advent of Sheppard upon the art scene.

The beginning of Sheppard's career coincided with the high noon of abstract art, when the representational was all but totally out of fashion. The Baltimore of his student years was no artistic backwater. It afforded him ready access not only to the great Walters Art Gallery's collection of traditional work but also to the Baltimore Museum's famous Cone collection, rich in major examples of Picasso and, especially, Matisse. The Baltimore



SUBWAY ENTRANCE—30" x 40"

Museum was zealous in promoting latest trends, as then exemplified by such abstractionists as Kline and de Kooning. Sheppard swam against the tide, even as a student. A pupil of Jacques Maroger (rediscoverer of Rubens' oil medium) and a friend of Reginald Marsh, he dared while studying at the Maryland Institute of Art to relate unabashedly to the great masters, to look to Leonardo, to study Rubens. His figurative work, his color sense, were sensational. Upon graduation from the Institute, he set up resolutely as a pro. Ignored by the Baltimore Museum, he entered and won major awards in distant exhibitions. He became the leading spirit of a regional group known as the Six Realists, which put on exhibitions that competed successfully with major shows sponsored jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and the Baltimore Museum. His regional and national reputation grew, making its way robustly against the stylish trend. Today, the pendulum has swung, and Sheppard's work—which never had lacked for popular support—now is receiving the universal recognition it has always deserved.

R. P. HARRISS

Art Editor, *The Baltimore News American*
Formerly of the *New York Herald Tribune Staff*.



MAGAZINE STAND—12" x 16"



COOLING OFF—16" x 20"





THE MARKET—12" x 16"



SHOE SHINE—12" x 16"



AFTERNOON AT THE MET—30" x 40"



CHECKERS—20" x 24"



FOURTH OF JULY—60" x 84"





PIGEONS—11" x 14"



A RIDE THROUGH THE PARK—24" x 30"



AMERICAN HERITAGE—48" x 48"
GOVERNOR'S PRIZE
MARYLAND ARTISTS, BALTIMORE MUSEUM



9TH AVE. MARKET—20" x 24"



BEGGAR—12" x 16"



OUT TO LUNCH—12" x 16"



GEORGE'S FRANKS—12" x 16"



5TH AVE. BUS—36" x 48"



THE WINDOW—12" x 16"



McSORLEY'S—24" x 30"



ICE SKATERS—30" x 40"



GREENWICH VILLAGE—20" x 24"



ORCHARD STREET—24" x 30"



STATEN ISLAND FERRY—36" x 40"



TAKE FIVE—24" x 30"



SNOWY NIGHT—12" x 16"



PRETZEL MAN—12" x 16"

